



The Trek

David Schachne

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The Trek takes the fabulously funny and enjoyable book "A Walk in the Woods" by Bill Bryson to a much higher altitude. The Trek tells the story of David Schachne's adventure in November, 2004, attempting to summit Kala Patthar, a mountain which towers above Everest Base Camp in the Himalayas. At 18,192 feet above sea level, the summit of Kala Patthar offers successful climbers one of the most amazing views of Mount Everest (29,035 feet) without having to put your life at risk by entering the Khumbu Icefall, or by climbing Mount Lhotse or Mount Nuptse. Raised in Brooklyn, NY, Schachne loved visiting the great outdoors as a teenager, going camping and hiking in the Catskills and Adirondacks. Throughout his early adult life, he had a burning desire to go trekking in the Himalayas. He believed going there would make his life more fulfilled. Schachne certainly didn't expect his trek to be a "walk in the park," but he was ill-prepared for what was in store for him. Climbing for hours and hours each day while mentally and physically exhausted; confronting sub-freezing temperatures; dealing with illness, high altitude sickness, piercing headaches, wretched odors, utter filth, bacterial infections, dysentery and more, he endured two weeks of pure, nightmarish misery. In this riveting account of his gut-wrenching trek over fourteen sleepless days and nights, while basically malnourished, Schachne takes you along on each and every step of his journey. You'll experience the ups and downs of the hills and valleys, and the highs and lows of his personal triumphs and chaotic travails. He flies from Kathmandu in Nepal to the most dangerous airport in the world (Tenzing Hillary Airport), in a town called Lukla, then hikes to Namche Bazaar, a virtual flea market at 11,000 feet, then Thyangboche Monastery and then Dingboche, Dzugla, Lobuche and Gorak Shep, before finally attempting the summit. Schachne reveals what originally led him to fall in love with nature, why he...

The Trek Details

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Kim says

I received this book in a Goodreads giveaway.

I enjoyed reading this book but it was definitely different than I expected. I have read several accounts of tries to summit Everest and thought this book, which is a trek up one of the "smaller" Himalayan mountains, would be similar. The book is more of a story of the author's personal trek rather than a group attempt. The trek was a package trip, not an "expedition" so there was very little of the group focus or camaraderie of other tales.

I did think several times that the author was an idiot to attempt starting the trip when he was sick, and much of the book deals with his misery of being ill in primitive surrounds.

John says

Easy read, enjoyable and accessible

I felt like I was on the mountain with David when I read his book. More over, it made a trek like his seem accessible - assuming one would want to endure all of the hardships he and his group faced along the way.

Read Ng says

This was a GoodReads giveaway win.

It's a story of fulfilling one's dream and self discovery. The story gives me mixed emotions. Often I think the "trek" can't be all that bad, then I think this sounds like a bad idea. And overall I think for the average person, you must be insane to even attempt.

Many years ago I read Riding the Iron Rooster. What stuck with me was the obsession with the lack of sanitation and how life was not the "Western" way. Trek has a similar obsession but with toilet facilities. But I have to remind myself that it is really a self discovery book and a reminder to the author, just how awful certain aspects of the trek really were. It serves as a warning to himself to think very carefully before his next adventure.

Overall I liked his story. I don't have any personal experience with bitter cold, high altitude conditions, constantly being sick, and punishing yourself with a march up a mountain, for days on end. You do come away with a small sense of just how difficult it can be.

Have a GoodReads.

Vizma says

Realistic recap of a bucket list climb! Very vivid descriptions of the physical hardships involved-definitely a must read if anyone is considering this kind of a climb!!

I received this book thru Goodreads First Reads.

Maria says

A very honest and compelling account of stretching oneself to the very limits to see what you can achieve. As a businessman, David always seemed cool, calm, collected and super confident. It was great to see a completely different side. As a trekker or businessman, David's tenacity and perseverance shine through. Also, a great peek into the great strength of mind and body necessary for such a trek. Well done!

Marvin says

David Schachne told me what I already knew. That anyone who would even go near Mount Everest and battle 18,000 ft elevations is either a masochist or a moron. And I say this knowing I get altitude sickness one foot over 12,000 feet above sea level. From the experiences the author had while trekking to the summit of Kala Pathar (elevation 18,192 feet), I think he would agree with me. Yet he also writes about the value of the challenge and fulfilling your dreams. That is the heart of his book. That is the part I took away from reading this entertaining story and why I found it a worthwhile read.

Schachne has a jaunty, also dark humor style in this book, which is mostly a travel diary. He has a pleasant style that looks back, to what must have been a difficult trip, with amusement and maybe just a little nostalgia. But he certainly took away any desire I had, of which there was little, to take a similar trek. I have learned more about Nepalese outhouses than I ever want to know and his depiction of food poisoning were a little too descriptive. But there are also sweet segments like his interaction with a poor but playful four year old girl oblivious to her poverty. I wish there were more scenes in the book like that.

The thing that makes this book different than others written about the same region is that it gives you a look at what the average person would experience on a commercial trek in the Himalayas. So if you are yearning to trek up a mountain in Nepal, you should read this book to get an idea what you will be up against. With a little luck, David will talk you out of it.

Heather says

I started out really liking this book. The author clearly laid out the fact that this was not a story of a daring climbing expedition to the summit of Mount Everest or K2, but was a story based off of his day-to-day activities and journal entries climbing to Kala Patthar. I also really liked that this book's author; David

Schanchne, states that he is an “Average Joe Guy”, someone we can all relate to.

The book started out with a refreshing tone, in the fact that we got to understand what the areas he visited are really like. In other books we always hear how wonderful and picturesque these places are, but in Schanchne’s book we get the real picture. These often weren’t positive descriptions. My favorite entry was his trek though Phadking where he states that the people on the trail don’t often take the care to defecate in a clean manner within the toilet area. Often travelers end up crapping all over the floor. His experience with the toilet area is funny.

The only parts I didn’t care for nor understand were the author’s fascination with a woman he met named Donna. He sates in his book that it was possibly an act of fate that they met; however you never hear about her again until the middle of the book. I didn’t understand the role she played.

Near the middle end of the book Donna appears again in a sexual dream he has about her. I could have done with out this journal entry. Here I am reading a great book about interesting trials and experiences on the mountain and all the sudden I’m thrust into a romance novel. This inclusion, made me reconsider the character of the author and examine the book in a new light.

Overall, the book was ok. It was refreshing to read something with a new take on trekking in high elevation mountains. However, I felt that the sexual entries did not belong in a mountaineering book and that is what turned me off.

I did receive this book as a free giveaway and am thankful for the chance to read and review it.

Jessi says

This was a great introduction to trekking for me. It was easy to read, personal, and I felt like I really got to know David as he climbed and suffered. I hadn't read a book on climbing or trekking in quite some time so this was refreshing. I really enjoyed the tone, the journal format, and the overall conversation. It was as if I was trekking and suffering right along with him, in the best way, and journey possible given the experience.

D Fleischman says

The real deal

I have read several books of people's experience trekking to Everest base camp, as well as watching many YouTube videos, but this is the first book that really tells me how bad it can be. I appreciate this. Some people may feel it puts a downer on the experience, but I am exhilarated thinking about going, but also scared. Knowing how illness and cold weather can really screw things up, is important. Going with this knowledge, I believe, will help me in the end by helping me make the right decisions along the trail. Thank you David , for telling how it really was for you.

Deborah aka Reading Mom says

Disclaimer: I received a complimentary copy of the book through the Goodreads First Reads Program. I was not required to provide a review. This is my honest opinion of the book

In order to enjoy the book, I think the reader must approach it with the correct expectations. If the reader anticipates that *The Trek* will be a book written by a professional/experienced life-long mountaineer describing an expedition of the type required to summit Everest, with all its attending accounts of cruel conditions beyond the scope of the ordinary person's imagination, then disappointment may result. The author is an amateur trekker/hiker looking to fulfill a life-long dream of trekking the Himalayas. This is not to downplay the difficulty of his experience (it was in no way a piece of cake and there were many challenges to be had), just to note that it is a "different" experience.

I like that the book is written in journal form. This gives the reader an intimate and personal view of the writer's feelings and emotions during his journey. Also interesting (and amusing at times for fellow travelers who have had to translate the fantasy of travel brochures into the sometimes not- so- much- fun reality of the actual experience) was including at the beginning of each chapter a print-out of the trekking company's brochure description of each day's activities and meal schedule (meticulously left exactly as stated by the company, including strange wording and spelling at times) and ending the chapter with the actual reality of the day. Sometimes I wondered if the company and the author were talking about the same day. I think Mr Schachne wondered that as well.

I do have to say that there were places that, in my opinion, the writer gave too much information to the reader. An example is the author's MANY descriptive passages chronicling his problems with diarrhea, "...exploded with a blast greater than a neutron bomb" or "...an explosive volcanic eruption with blistering hot molten excrement bursting out of me"Really, wouldn't a brief notation of recurring problems with intestinal distress or dysentery have sufficed? Although that may have been important to the man suffering the distress, do I really need to know that? In the same category of TMI (too much information) was the recounting of a dream (taking 5 pages to re-tell) in which he was (almost) unfaithful to his wife--not vital to the overall story in my opinion.

The book contains many photographs that help the reader visualize the terrain, the scenic vistas, the people, and the conditions encountered on this Himalayan trek. I had to laugh at the author's descriptions of the many swinging bridges that he encountered (and feared). I could have told him that he didn't need to go to a third world country to experience the "thrill" of believing you might die at any moment when a rope and wood suspension bridge gives way and tosses you hundreds of feet to the ground and rocks below. I experienced the "joy" of these bridges many times while living in Eastern Kentucky here in the U.S. I was also amused at times by the writer's description of how dirty things were, how bad the outhouses were, how bad the food was, how bad the stench was---I wondered if he was a bit naive--this is one of the poorest countries in the world, not known for great advances in technology, cuisine, hygiene, or fine lodging--were his expectations too high? People who sign on for this type of "adventure" do so in spite of the difficulties and deprivations, not because they believe the experience will be convenient or comfortable. I give kudos to the author's descriptions of the hard-working, kind, and loyal natives of Nepal. He treated them with the respect they deserve.

The author includes things that could be helpful to others thinking about making a similar journey--such as a comprehensive list of required gear and a description of high altitude sickness, which is a very real and potentially fatal danger. He makes it plain that this journey is not for the weak of mind, body, and heart.

Over all, the book was effective in providing an account of fulfilling a life-long dream. I'm glad he was able to have that experience and to re-live it through the writing of his book.
